

THE **GUARDIAN** **SUSTAINER**

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Guardianphoto by George Cohen

Wilfred Burchett visiting with staff at Guardian's New York office. From left, Jack A. Smith, Irwin Silber, Burchett and Karen Gellen.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE EDITOR:

On the road with Wilfred Burchett

By IRWIN SILBER

Traveling with Wilfred Burchett on more than two weeks of his current U.S. speaking tour has been an eye-opener in more ways than one.

Most interesting has been the reception accorded Wilfred in the various places we visited. In the large cities, Wilfred's speaking engagement has served as a symbolic rallying point by which thousands of people have been able to express their jubilation at the victories in Indochina and Angola.

For many, Wilfred's close association with Vietnam over the course of two decades has helped to make him the vehicle through which they can express the emotions evoked

by recent history. It was Wilfred's reports, after all, in the Guardian and in a number of books, which provided our movement with its most reliable (and sometimes most startling) information about the real Indochina war.

Wilfred's presence is also a symbol of our own struggle at home for democratic rights. Audiences are aware that on previous occasions when Wilfred has been to the U.S. his visa restricted him to a 25-mile radius of Manhattan and expressly forbade him the right to speak in public. So a part of their enthusiasm is at the victory we have won in our "freedom to hear" fight.

In a certain sense, however, Angola has been the most urgent symbol of this trip

The scars of that bitter battle within our movement which saw some elements adopt a class-collaborationist position in opposition to the MPLA in Angola are too recent and evoke sentiments too strong to be easily forgotten. And Wilfred's detailed factual accounts of the history of the MPLA, the origins of the rival "liberation" organizations, the activities of the Portuguese secret police in backing Unita ever since 1971 and the role of South Africa in support of Unita today—all this has deepened everyone's understanding of the real situation in Angola.

Interestingly enough, very few antagonistic "left" groups have shown up at the

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Still fighting for the people

Abe Weisburd at 70

"In 1917 I walked with my mother and father on Michigan Boulevard in Chicago carrying a sign reading, 'Hands off Russia,' after the Bolshevik revolution. I was 10 years old at the time."

That is Guardian staff member Abe Weisburd's recollection of his first demonstration. And in the 60 years since then, he has not once stopped fighting on the side of the people.

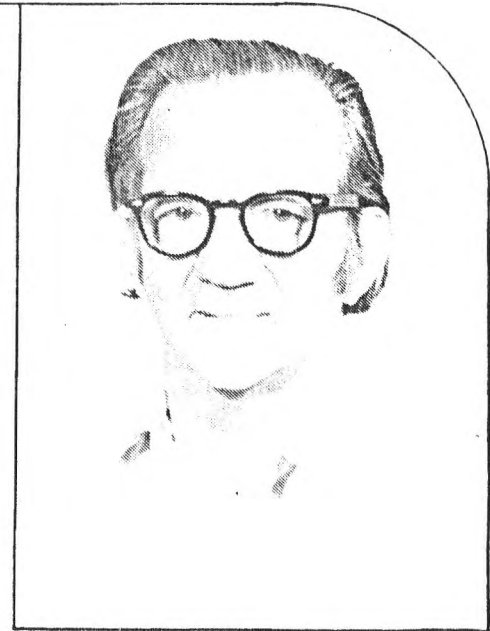
Abe recently celebrated his 70th birthday—and predicted he'll easily be around another 10 years. When told of our mandatory retirement age of 100, he scoffed that he didn't believe in mandatory retirement, no matter what the age.

It's often far too easy to say that so-and-so is one of the hardest working people you know, that he or she is one of the most dedicated. But with Abe it's true. At 70, he is still one of the first people in the office every morning, one of the first to volunteer to do a story even though he is already working six days a week.

And no matter what, Abe will stand up for the rights of those oppressed by capitalism. Often we'll hear of a case of a Black framed for murder, a prisoner beaten by guards, a Native American whose child is being taken away by the state. "It's a story for Abe," we'll say. "He'll do his best to defend them."

If you ask Abe about his history as a radical, he'll start with his work in the Sacco and Vanzetti defense movement and then take you through over half a century of U.S. struggles. He's been involved in so many cases, so many organizations, that he literally can't remember them all. The trade union movement, the civil rights movement, the antiwar movement—he's worked with all of them.

But there are always two themes Abe emphasizes: his work in the Black liberation movement and in defense of framed Blacks; and his work as a communist, first in the Communist Party which he joined in 1927, and later outside the party after he left in 1956.



Abe Weisburd.

A charter subscriber to the Guardian, Abe joined the paper's staff in 1970. "I've seen the Guardian grow from a widely diverse staff going in many directions to a staff unified behind the theory and practice of Marxism-Leninism," says Abe. "I trust I'll be with it the next decade."

On the road with Burchett

(Continued from page 1)

meetings. Perhaps the wiser ones realized the futility of debating Wilfred on the facts in Angola. Questions about the role of the Cubans in Angola today, Unita claims to enormous portions of Angolan territory and the like are dealt with thoroughly by Wilfred—sometimes with a documentation that is unassailable and sometimes with an authoritative "Nonsense!" when some particularly outrageous piece of claptrap is asserted as fact.

More importantly, many university audiences who come to hear Wilfred are seeking information to counter the virtual blackout in the U.S. press on the real situation in southern Africa. And here is where the real educational work is done.

The attacks by the John Birch Society and the Hearst press have livened up the proceedings immeasurably. It is sheer delight to watch people's faces as Wilfred reads a portion of the editorial denouncing him as a "KGB agent" and then details the facts surrounding his libel suit in Australia.

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This in itself is a valuable education for many people who have been conditioned to look at their morning newspapers as unimpeachable sources. Perhaps the funniest incident along this line occurred in San Diego—a rightwing stronghold—when Wilfred was interviewed over radio station KGB. A local supporter has a photo of Wilfred leaving the building with a KGB sign visible—and wouldn't the Birchers have a fine time with that one? It would be their first and only evidence in this outrageous slander campaign.

Meetings, both group and individual, with Guardian Sustainers have been one of the high points of the trip. Wilfred feels a deep sense of appreciation at the efforts of the Guardian Sustainers and when, as happens in almost every city, we meet a few readers and supporters who have stuck with the paper for more than 20 years (and some charter subscribers)—well, one can hardly tear him away.

One particular anecdote sticks in my mind. Wilfred recalls a discussion with Prince Sihanouk once about the great Vietnamese military leader, Vo Nguyen Giap. Sihanouk's admiration for Giap was unbounded. "He's the greatest military genius since Napoleon," said Sihanouk. Then, on a moment's reflection, "No, greater than Napoleon!"

Perhaps comparisons are odious. But certainly Wilfred Burchett has become the

Beal, Gellen to speak on Korea

Guardian readers in the New York area will have an opportunity next month to learn more about the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the struggle for Korean reunification.

Guardian general manager Frances M. Beal, recently returned from the DPRK, and foreign editor Karen Gellen will speak, as will a representative from the Committee in Solidarity with the Korean People, which is cosponsoring the event with the New York Guardian Club.

One of a few Americans to visit the country in years, Beal will speak on life, politics and culture in the DPRK and the advances of socialism. Gellen is the U.S. representative to the International Liaison Committee for Korean Reunification and will speak on that subject, which is of special importance to U.S. anti-imperialists. A Korean film on reunification will also be shown. A question and answer period will follow the talks.

The event is at 7:30 pm, Friday Dec. 9, at the McBurney YMCA, 215 W. 23rd St. (just west of 7th Ave.). \$2 Donation.

foremost radical journalist of the Western world since John Reed. And his canvas has been even larger, documenting the 25 years that shook the world.

FROM THE MANAGING EDITOR:

How I evaluate the Guardian

By JACK A. SMITH

When the paper rolls off the presses each Thursday morning, I'm generally unsatisfied. This is how it should be. Any managing editor—whose job is to get the paper together from start to finish—who is generally pleased or complacent, is presiding over an operation which will inevitably start sliding downhill.

I see what's wrong with the Guardian in a way most readers and even fellow workers don't see, largely because I view it as a package—not just some good articles or graphics here or there.

The Guardian, to me, is a propaganda weapon for the people from pages 1 to 24 and for that weapon to work effectively each piece of it must be in its proper place and in working order.

My judgment, of course, is based upon what's possible for a paper with our extraordinarily limited resources, although I've always believed such an argument is valid only up to a certain point; that there are things we can do even if the rulebooks say we can't.

The way I judge the finished paper each week is whether there has been a good balance in our efforts to broaden the Guardian to reach the widest progressive forces while deepening the paper's Marxist interpretation of events, in each article as in the product as a whole; whether there's a good balance between sharp and correct political articles and Viewpoints and the inevitable political mistakes that crop up in the paper; between domestic and international sections; between news pieces and analytical pieces; between on-the-spot coverage and office-written copy; between really good writing and mediocre writing; between articles dealing with repression and those dealing with resistance; between material we've dug up exclusively and material everyone else is writing about, even if—in the latter category—ours is better; between Guardian-originated photographs and photos we get elsewhere; between our strategic decision to go heavy on certain subjects (such as southern Africa, liberation movements, labor coverage, etc.) and our tactical achievements in these areas every week.

Then there are things such as typos, idiotic sentences or paragraphs, sloppy editing, second-rate articles which could have been better had we the time or extra rewrite person to handle them correctly, articles we should have had but didn't, bad design, unfortunate photo selection. The list goes on and on.

JUDGING THE LAST THREE ISSUES

When everything's in alignment, every four or five issues, we've done as well as we can do and it's an excellent issue, all else taken into consideration. When a great deal is out of kilter, every seven or eight issues perhaps, I start to go on the prowl and have hideous thoughts about turning everything and everyone upside down—not to mention the nightmare that we might fail two weeks in a row. Most weeks we put out fairly good issues, but excellence is the goal.

Using this barometer, I judged the last three issues as: (Nov. 2) not good, despite the extraordinary cover showing little John Vorster attempting to tie a gag around the heroic figure of South African blacks and several quite good articles; (Nov. 9) fairly good, even though we had a more than usual amount of well-written and timely material; (Nov. 16) spectacular, covering just about every base required to make the Guardian a totally effective weapon in the hands of the people. Chances are you didn't think of these issues in this way when you read them.

A lot of elements went into making Nov. 16 an excellent paper, the most important, in my mind, being the two fine stories we had on page 1.

Hardly any of the bourgeois papers even noted the great victory won by farm workers in Arizona. I haven't seen the story in any other commercial paper, though I imagine the Arizona papers had quite a bit of coverage. Tom Barry did a good reporting job and it was well-handled by our desk—both as to editing and placement. At this writing I haven't seen a similar piece in any of the left papers, though I imagine they'll pick it up next week—or should. So we had an on-the-spot account, well handled, that no one else had.

The same goes for Karen Gellen's report on "Conflict escalates in Sahara." This story is a natural for the big commercial papers, but neither the Washington Post nor New York Times (as of Nov. 13, two days after we went to press) has carried a word. The Guardian was able to get some of the inside stuff because of our contact with the Sahara liberation movement, a good relationship with the Algerians and an ongoing interest in the area, which made it easy for us to understand the significance of the new developments. None of the left papers has yet carried the material and with perhaps one or two exceptions, it's doubtful they will have any coverage at all.

I mention all of this because I'd like Guardian Sustainers to begin to judge the paper in the all round way I try to judge it every week. My system of evaluation is no great thing but it does assess the entire package against some kind of barometer and I think it helps to make us a better people's paper. I hope that when you begin to judge the paper this way you'll give me the benefit of your comments and criticisms.

News from our office

By WILLIAM RYAN

Here's a brief report on some of our ongoing activities:

Sustainers

The Sustainer drive has made progress in the past couple of weeks, but we are still short of our goal of 150 new members. It'll probably take a few more weeks. It is extremely important that we do not lose any existing Sustainers. We need a zero attrition rate this year. So, if you're behind, please catch up fast. And if you are of two minds about remaining in the program, please decide in our favor. We need you as never before!

Circulation

Our mass circulation mailing has resulted in hundreds of new Guardian readers so far and the returns are still coming in. Good responses are coming in from our "Each one reach one" campaign, from people who want to help distribute the Guardian and improve our circulation in their areas to those who have convinced others to subscribe or have sent in gift subs for friends. We hope that many more readers, particularly Sustainers, will "reach one," especially while our \$15 holiday gift sub rate is in effect.

Marketplace

Orders are pouring in for items in the holiday Marketplace. We are especially proud of the products produced by our own art department: the 1978 calendar, note cards and postcards, and expect good sales. We are counting on the Marketplace to be an important source of revenue this year, so place your orders with us.

Guardian Clubs

After its first month, the Guardian Clubs network is starting to take shape. There are now five Clubs (Bay Area, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles and New York) and two Club organizing committees (Minneapolis and Seattle).

The Clubs have established committees and begun work on various practical tasks, primarily news gathering, circulation and organizing for Wilfred Burchett's tour, and have begun their program of study.

Club circulation committees have begun work to increase the Guardian's presence in local bookstores and newsstands, particularly in the Bay Area and New York.

(Sustainers interested in joining a Club or in getting an organizing committee started may contact me at the Guardian.)

Letters from our Sustainers

This spot in *The Guardian Sustainers* will be reserved for your letters every month. Try to keep them as brief as possible. All letters will be printed with the author's initials but you must send in the communication with your full name.

HORN OF AFRICA

A.S., Eugene, Ore.: I'm glad that your reporting on the Horn of Africa is becoming more balanced. The conflict between the progressive regime in Ethiopia and the secessionist movements in the Ogaden and Eritrea are true tragedies with honest revolutionary forces on both sides. In such situations it should be the goal of revolutionary forces to attempt to find a higher unity that can bring the contesting sides back together, not to one-sidedly accept the position of one or the other contestant. How can you be so sure that the secessionists are not equivalent to the Biafran (or Bangladesh) secessionists, or at least do not share important elements in common with them?

Guardian reply: While it contains some progressive aspects we do not view the Ethiopian regime as progressive. The comparison between the 16-year just struggle of EPLF for Eritrean independence to Biafra or Bangladesh cannot legitimately be made. This is a complex situation which must not be oversimplified. We are still studying the Ogaden dispute.

PARTY-BUILDING—1

A.R., Cambridge, Mass.: I strongly disagree that this is the time to put the emphasis on party-building as opposed to mass work. I especially disagree with the way Guardian Clubs is going about it. Without a strong base in the working class, parties have failed and will fail.

Guardian Clubs, by building on support work (for the Guardian, for liberation movements) rather than shop work, and based on the readership of the Guardian . . . will inevitably attract petit-bourgeois cadre. Without the concrete, material experience and identity with the proletariat, such an organization is very unlikely to develop a materialist approach to leading the struggle forward. Rather, the idealist approach of party-building through ideological struggle, characteristic of the "new communist movement," will continue.

PARTY-BUILDING—2

R.J., St. Louis: The Philadelphia Workers Organizing Committee (PWOC) has published an article in the Organizer criticizing the Guardian Clubs as an attempt by the Guardian to set up a national center for the party-building movement. I agree that this would be incorrect, although not for the same reasons as PWOC.

However, I don't believe the Clubs are intended for that purpose. Rather, they are—or should be—an effort to draw

together a number of now independent Marxist-Leninists in an organization around the newspaper and its political line, not to try to dominate other forces in the party-building movement, but to work with them in developing a line and ultimately an organization. I would like the Guardian to make this point more clearly.

PWOC, however, emphasizes the "critical importance and central role" that PWOC and other "fusion"-oriented organizations must play in constructing a "real center for our trend." When our party-building movement has developed enough to have a real center, it will not be because one or another organization calls itself one, but will be the result of the development and propagation of a political line around which Marxist-Leninists can unite.

Guardian reply: The Philadelphia article you quote read so much more into our Guardian Clubs proposal than we do that, frankly, we cannot view it entirely seriously. Nowhere in anything written by us will you find the suggestion that the Guardian be a national center for the party-building movement.

GUARDIAN CLUBS

J.B.K., San Francisco: I hope the Guardian doesn't bite off more than it can chew with the Guardian Clubs. I'm all for the initiation of a formation that can give a concrete base to my and the Guardian's political line. But if the Clubs set their sights too high at the beginning, it may not pan out over the long run.

The Guardian Clubs aren't in a position to aspire to capture center stage in the party-building movement. There is talk out here of the Clubs leading a "rectification" movement. Yes, our political line can win over many people. But in order to win concrete leadership over large numbers of communists, the Clubs must have a solid organizational structure, and better defined political line than the 10 points.

Guardian reply: Once again, some people read more into our Clubs proposal than we do. This is probably inevitable in the beginning, largely because some groups may overestimate the Guardian's abilities. We don't, and have intentionally established quite modest goals for the Clubs. We have no secret plan. Everything is contained in our special Club article which appeared in the paper. Nothing beyond this has been authorized by us.

CIRCULATION

K.W., Columbus, Ohio: Please send circulation materials you think would be helpful.

Volunteers needed!

We deeply appreciate volunteer workers, not only because they are nice but because we desperately need them.

There are dozens of tasks to be done in our New York office that we don't have sufficient help to accomplish.

The editorial department, in particular, needs helpers Tuesday evenings and day and early evening hours Wednesday. This is largely for proofreading, which we can easily teach you how to do.

The administrative department has special needs for volunteers on certain days, evenings or weeks.

If you have some evenings free or are between jobs, retired, or have mornings or afternoons without classes, spend a few hours with us on a regular basis each week. To become a Guardian volunteer, contact Donna Lamb at 212-691-0404.

Right now I put half of my weekly bundle of Guardians in a local bookstore and the other half I sell or give away at meetings and demonstrations. I also try to do free distribution of larger bundles whenever the opportunity arises.

I'm especially interested in opening new store outlets. With at least one other person, I am going to approach a number of small stores that carry a local, vaguely anti-imperialist paper about carrying the Guardian. In addition, we plan to go to most city bookstores and newsstands. Finally, we're going to talk to community centers and health clinics, especially in poor and working-class neighborhoods to see if they'll take a few papers each week. We also ask progressive organizations on university campuses to carry the paper in their offices.

CPUSA

W.F., New York City: Why doesn't the Guardian do more reporting on the Communist Party USA? An in-depth look at what they do, from trade union work to their electoral campaigns, would be more of an expose than all the polemics. They are, after all, still the largest left party in the U.S.

I would also like to see more reporting on developments in the Soviet Union. A complete position on whether or not capitalism has been fully restored in the U.S.S.R. is not a prerequisite for insightful reportage.

Spare typewriter?

Can you imagine a newspaper office without typewriters?

We're getting near that point at the Guardian, as our old and well-used machines are wearing out one by one. We desperately need several electric typewriters in good working order. If you have any to donate, or know where we can get some, please give us a call. If you don't, how about making an extra contribution to help us buy some rebuilt ones?